

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY OTTAWA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY RYEKJAVIK
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
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C O N F I D E N T I A L CAPE TOWN 0082

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PORG, SF, WA
SUBJ: NAMIBIA: THE SAG STAND ON THE PROXIMITY TALKS

REF: CAPE TOWN 79

1. DURING THE ONE HOUR WE SPENT WITH PIK BOTHA YESTERDAY
EVENING, HE TOUCHED ON A VARIETY OF NOW FAMILIAR
ARGUMENTS TO UNDERSCORE SAG ATTITUDE THAT TIME IS
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RUNNING OUT ON EFFORTS TO FIND AN INTERNATIONALLY
ACCEPTABLE SOLUTION. ONE OF THESE WAS THAT DELAY
AND VACILLATION WAS CREATING A POLITICAL MALAISE IN
SWA AMONG WHITES AND BLACKS THAT THREATENED STABILITY
IN THE AREA. HIS CONCLUSION: "WE CAN'T ALLOW
THIS TO GON ON MUCH LONGER OR WE WILL HAVE RHODESIA
ALL OVER AGAIN." A SECOND THEME WAS THAT SAG IS

PREPARED TO DO WHAT THE WEST HAS REQUESTED IN THE PAST (I.E. ONE-MAN-ONE-VOTE, ELECTIONS, ALLOW UN AND FOREIGN PRESS TO OBSERVE, REMOVE DISCRIMINATION, RELEASE PRISONERS, ETC) BUT WEST KEEPS PUSHING FOR MORE AND MORE CONCESSIONS FOR SWAPO LEADING TO SUSPICION THAT IT FAVORS A SWAPO TAKE-OVER. SOUTH AFRICA CANNOT BE PART TO THE TRANSFER OF POWER TO PEOPLE WHO DO NOT BELIEVE IN DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES AND WHO IN TAKING OVER THE COUNTRY WOULD DISRUPT RATHER THAN FOSTER THE TERRITORY'S ECONOMY. A THIRD LINE OF ARGUMENT FOCUSED ON THE GROWING CONCLUSION AMONG SOUTH AFRICANS THAT NO MATTER WHAT THEY DO TO SATISFY WORLD OPINION, IT BRINGS NO RELIEF FROM INTENSIFIED PRESSURE. HE SAID VORSTER BELIEVES THE PRICE IS BECOMING TOO HIGH AND HE NO LONGER CONSIDERS WHAT THE WORLD THINKS ABOUT SOUTH AFRICA AS IMPORTANT.

2. WE COUNTERED THESE ARGUMENTS POINTING OUT THE IMPORTANCE OUR GOVERNMENTS ATTACH TO ACHIEVING AN INTERNATIONALLY ACCEPTABLE SOLUTION AND THE ADVANTAGES THAT WOULD ACCRUE TO SAG IN DISPLAYING PATIENCE TO ACHIEVE THAT END. WE STRESSED THE ADVERSE EFFECTS WHICH A UNILATERAL SETTING OF ELECTION DATE WOULD HAVE ON THE NEGOTIATIONS. AGAIN WE REVIEWED THE PURPOSE OF OUR EFFORT IN FAVOR OF A PROCESS THAT IS OPEN AND FAIR TO ALL PARTIES AND NOT BENT IN FAVOR OF ANY ONE OF THEM.

3. I SENSE THAT BOTHA'S GOING THROUGH HIS CATALOG OF ARGUMENTS AGAIN WAS DESIGNED (A) TO PLAY ON SIR DAVID SCOTT'S CONFIDENTIAL

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INCREASINGLY EVIDENT SYMPATHIES FOR SAG REASONABLENESS AS AGAINST SWAPO'S "DILATORY TACTICS AND INTRANSIGENCE" AND (B) TO LET US KNOW THAT HE FACED A FORMIDABLE TASK IN CONVINCING VORSTER TO PUT OFF ANNOUNCEMENT OF AN ELECTION DATE. DURING THE NO-CONFIDENCE DEBATE. REGARDING THIS LAST POINT BOTHA DOES FACE DIFFICULTIES WITH VORSTER AND THE MORE CONSERVATIVE MEMBERS OF THE CABINET WHO ARE INCLINED TO WRITE OFF WORLD OPINION. BOTHA'S TASK IS MADE THE HARDER BY HIS PERSONAL VIEW, AS EXPRESSED TO HENRY FORD, THAT AN INTERNATIONAL SOLUTION ACCEPTABLE TO THE SIDES IS NOT ATTAINABLE AND THEREFORE AN INTERNAL SOLUTION AFFORDS THE MORE PRACTICAL ALTERNATIVE. BOTHA MUST THEREFORE JUSTIFY HIS RECOMMENDATION FOR ACCEPTING THE TERMS OF OUR COMMUNIQUE ON PROCEDURAL RATHER THAN SUBSTANTIVE GROUNDS, I.E., THAT ACCEPTANCE ENHANCES SOUTH AFRICA'S POSTURE OF REASONABLENESS WHILE REJECTION WILL PLAY INTO THE HANDS OF SWAPO.

4. AS REFLECTED IN REFTTEL, BOTHA CONSIDERED OUR REQUEST THAT NO DATE FOR ELECTIONS BE MADE MUCH THE GREATER OBSTACLE TO SAG ACCEPTANCE OF THE NEW YORK TALKS THAN THE DIFFICULTY OF ADJUSTING HIS SCHEDULE TO THE WESTERN PROPOSAL. HE PROMISED HIS BEST EFFORTS TO GET VORSTER TO AGREE. MY HUNCH IS THAT

AS RELUCTANT AS VORSTER MAY BE TO WITHHOLD ANNOUNCING A
DATE FOR ELECTIONS, IN THE FACE OF AN INVITATION BY THE FIVE
FOREIGN MINISTERS HE CANNOT AFFORD TO PUT HIMSELF IN THE
POSITION OF BEING NEGATIVE.
BOWDLER

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